CHAPTER 2: BEING AND DASEIN

It is said that Being is the most universal and the emptiest concept[1]

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse selected sections of the text of *Being and Time*[2] with a specific focus on gaining a thorough understanding of Heidegger's ideas on Being and human being. This chapter is then a preparation for a comprehensive conception of Heidegger's ideas on truth, language and technology. In this context, I introduce Heidegger's understanding of the distinction between Being and beings. I will address problems and criticisms that arise from Heidegger's analysis of human being and Being in Chapter 6.

2.2 *Being and Time*: An Overview

Being and Time (1927) is considered to be Heidegger's most significant work. It was supposed to have two major parts, each divided into three major subdivisions. The first part was intended to present an analytic of Dasein in the light of temporality, in order to show how time forms the horizon for the question of Being. In the second part, the destruction of the history of ontology was to be carried out and illustrated in respect to the question of temporality. The first part was planned in three divisions: (1) the preparatory fundamental analysis of Dasein; (2) Dasein and Temporality; (3) time and Being. The second part was intended to contain: (1) Kant's doctrine of schematism in the context of the problematic of temporality; (2) the ontological foundation of the *cogito sum* of Descartes and the taking over of medieval ontology within the problematic of *res cogitans*; (3) a discussion of Aristotle's treatise on time, in order to show the limits of ancient ontology.

In 1927, the work was published in an incomplete form. In its present form, the book contains only the first two major subdivisions of the first part. The portion containing the interpretation of Kant, which was meant to form part of the second division, was published separately in the volume *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics.*

Heidegger's insight in *Being and Time* is that many of the problems in thinking, that are distinctive of philosophy, are due to a particular way of understanding the nature

of reality, a view that arose at the beginning of Western history and continues today. This traditional ontology is called the 'metaphysics of presence', because of its emphasis on the enduring presence of that which is ultimately real. In this view, that which is ultimately real is that which underlies properties – that which remains continuously present throughout all change. For Heidegger, this traditional ontology is apparent in Plato's notion of the Ideas, Aristotle's primary substances, the Christian creator, Descartes' *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, Kant's noumena and the physical stuff presupposed by scientific naturalism.[3]

Heidegger rejects the 'metaphysics of presence' by challenging the idea that reality must be thought of in terms of the idea of substance at all. He hopes to recover a more fundamental sense of things by setting aside the view of reality we get from theorising and rather focusing on the way things appear in the flux of our everyday, prereflective activities.

Heidegger's investigation in *Being and Time* starts with an enquiry into our own being, insofar we are the entities who have some understanding of Being, and he does so in order to lay the foundation for an enquiry into Being as such. The question of Being is therefore reformulated as a question about the conditions for the accessibility or intelligibility of things. In order to underline his rejection of the traditional ways of speaking about human being in terms of consciousness, Heidegger uses the term Dasein – literally translated as being-there – instead. The use of the term Dasein is meant to signify that Heidegger regards human being from a specific point of view – as a being who is distinguished by his relationship to Being[4].

Heidegger tells us that there is no pure, external vantage point from which we can have a disinterested, presuppositionless angle on things. It is only because we are always already involved in a way of life, engaged with daily dealings with things in a known life-world, that we can have some understanding of what things are all about. It is our being as participants in a collective world that first allows us a way of seeing reality and ourselves[5]. Thus, Heidegger's existential analytic starts out from a description of our average-everydayness as agents in practical concerns. Insofar as past theorising pervades our commonsense outlook, especially the Cartesian ontology of modernity, Heidegger's fundamental ontology will entail a confrontation with the assumptions of common sense. This challenge to common sense is most apparent in Heidegger's description of Dasein. His description is in sharp opposition to that of Descartes[6], who saw human being as a mind located in a material body.

Heidegger subverts this binary opposition, and instead describes human existence as a happening. Heidegger tells us that '... subject and object are not the same as Dasein and the world'.[7]

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger attempts to apply a 'hermeneutic phenomenology' to an analytic of man's mode of being. Heidegger sees the main problem underlying philosophy's main concern as the question about the meaning of Being. This question is to be dealt with in ontology; yet such an ontology is to be prepared by a fundamental ontology which must take the form of an ek-sistential analytic of man's mode of being: being-in-the-world. From the outset, Heidegger makes it clear that what is to be understood as hermeneutic phenomenology in *Being and Time* is not the same as Husserl's transcendental phenomenology[8]. Heidegger develops phenomenology in his own way, beyond the stage that it had been brought to by Husserl himself, although Heidegger sees in Husserl's phenomenology the indispensable foundation for such further development. What is the relationship between Heidegger and Husserl's conception of phenomenology in this regard? How does Heidegger develop Husserl's phenomenology in a new direction?

2.3 Heidegger and Husserl

Following Husserl, Heidegger aims to recall philosophy to its basics, alerting it to the danger of an era, which had lost its power to question deeply. In Heidegger's philosophy, we encounter a fundamental critique of the foundations of Western metaphysical thinking that subverts the concept of the transcendental ego as completely as it does the traditional notion of Being as substance. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger reworks Husserl's 'unphenomenological phenomenology'[9] and points phenomenology in a new 'existentialist' direction.

For Heidegger, phenomenology (*legein ta phainomena*: to let what shows itself be seen from itself) is that method by means of which we let that which of its own accord manifests itself, reveal itself as it is[10]. Thus, Heidegger revises Husserl's phenomenological method so that it might properly respond to the question of Being. He 'reopens the brackets' (Husserl's phenomenological epoché) to let existence back in. Existence is to be understood as neither mere subjectivity nor objectivity, but as an essential openness to the Being of beings.

Husserlian phenomenology operates largely at the level of epistemology. Husserl believed that this required a suspension of the ontological question of Being, in order to focus on the workings of consciousness[11]. Heidegger now shifts the emphasis from the meaning of consciousness to the meaning of Being. He accepts the conviction of phenomenology that an analysis of the essential structures of meaning requires a movement beyond subject-object dualism, leading us back to our originary experience of the world, that is, to the 'things themselves'. Whereas Husserl identified this originary experience as a consciousness-of-the-world, Heidegger interprets it as a being-in-the-world. Husserl's epistemological question 'What does it mean to know?' is transformed into the question 'What does it mean to be?' in Heidegger's conception[12].

2.4 The Question of Being

Heidegger proposes to recover the original question of Being, which founded Greek metaphysics, and by extension, Western culture as a whole. The search for a fundamental ontology is not easy because, according to Heidegger, the entire history of metaphysics, from Plato to Kant has developed in forgetfulness of its own original questioning[13]. This forgetfulness is most evident in the modern age.

Man's primordial experience of Being, in terms of his temporal being-in-the-world has been obscured in elaborate metaphysical systems. As a result, for us today the question of Being has become the emptiest of all questions. Metaphysics has replaced our temporally and existentially lived experience of Being (*Sein*), with objectified abstractions of timeless beings (*Seiendes*). Most important of these is '*On*', the most generalised abstraction of Being, and '*Theon*', the most elevated abstraction of Being. Metaphysics has thus become, according to Heidegger, an onto-theology that ignores the originally phenomenological character of our existence as being-in-the-world[14]. Onto-theology favours a divisive dualism of subject and object, expressing itself either as idealism (being as a worldless subject), or as realism (being as a subjectless world). The original ontological difference between *Sein* and *Seiende* is forgotten.

The ontological difference can be thought of metaphysically as well as phenomenologically. In metaphysics, the 'Being of beings is thought of in advance as the grounding ground'[15]. On the other hand, phenomenologically, the difference between Being and beings appears as the preservation of both in a process of

unconcealment that keeps in concealment.[16] To think of the ontological difference in a metaphysical context precludes any historical perspective. To step back from metaphysical constructions to their phenomenological destruction allows us to think of the ontological difference in its historical process (*Austrag*). Phenomenologically, it is impossible to represent Being as the general characteristic of particular things. Being is given a thoroughly historic character. 'Physis, Logos, Hen, Idea, Energeia, Substantiality, Objectivity, Subjectivity, the Will, the Will to Power, the Will to Will'[17] and Technology are names for a mode of self-disclosure of Being by which it shows and hides itself at the same time.

Heidegger champions phenomenology as a means of recovering the fundamental question of Being - 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' This question restores a sense of wonder that things should be at all rather than not be. Heidegger proclaims the necessity of reviving this question by 'deconstructing' Western metaphysics and thereby 'retrieving' the original experience of Being. What exactly does Heidegger mean when he speaks of Being?

At first glance, it seems that the question of Being is a question regarding an abstruse philosophical concept, but, in fact, this question is one that, in the ordinary course of events, concerns every human being. It does matter to us whether a thing or a state of affairs is or is not. The word 'being' serves in one of its uses as a designation for ourselves as human being, and can be used to refer to other sorts of realities as well. Being is, however, most characteristically, thought of as a property belonging (or not belonging) to something, in other words, as a condition possessed by it.

This understanding of Being serves only as a point of departure from which we can begin to understand Heidegger's concept of Being, since his conception of it is radical and unique. To speak the word 'Being' in the manner of the preceding paragraphs is misleading for Heidegger. For him, 'Unlike beings, Being cannot be represented or brought forth in the manner of an object. As that which is altogether other than all beings, Being is that which is not.'[18] Being should not be seen as an abstraction that belongs to the sphere of philosophical thinking, since for Heidegger, it is '...nearer to man than every being, be it a rock, a beast, a work of art, a machine, be it an angel or God.'[19] Being is in no sense an entity beside all the entities that human beings know. It is utterly unique. We can at best say that in Heidegger's conception, Being is a pure Happening that reveals itself immediately in everything that in any way is – 'Appearing is the very essence of being'[20].

In order to speak of the Being of what-is in a manner that evinces its immediacy, Heidegger uses the word *anwesen* – presencing.[21] In Heidegger's view, anything that is truly present encounters us powerfully precisely from within itself. Anything that presences has its own 'in-itselfness', which we cannot penetrate. Whatever presences, remains inviolable in its centeredness. Thus, Heidegger explains that the Being of what-is is self-maintaining self-concealing, as well as self-maintaining self-revealing. This is necessarily so, since a pure self-concealing could not maintain itself.

Being is the pure Happening that meets human being in whatever is. But Being and what-is are not two separate 'somethings' that are externally related to one another – '...Being is not a thing...'[22]. Also, Being should not be thought of as the 'ground' of what is, since this kind of thinking only remains caught up in the sphere of the what-is.

As I have mentioned, Heidegger differentiates between Being and what-is by identifying what he calls the 'ontological difference'. 'The ontological difference is the 'not' between beings and Being.'[23] Recognition of this difference is obligatory for the safeguarding of the uniqueness of Being, as well as for the understanding of the interrelation between Being and what-is.

For Heidegger, Being and beings are related to each other as a Twofold (*Zwiefalt*). 'What-is' does not mean any particular entity or being, or even the mere sum of intrinsically separate entities. Rather, what-is is a unitary manifold of particulars, within whose totality every entity belongs as a participant in what is a single, intricate happening.

The pure Happening that Heidegger calls Being is intricately nuanced in its bringing of itself to pass. It is a self-concealing that opens itself and comes to self-manifestation as the being of what-is. Being and what-is happen separately from each other, precisely in their happening toward one another in coming upon and arriving. As the uniting-separating same that in holding apart achieves this happening toward, pure Happening is, with respect to both Being and what-is in their happening, thus distinctively a 'Difference that transpires as an accomplishing carrying out that at once reveals, in preservingly harbouring forth, and preserves, in harbouring protectingly.'[24] In that carrying out, there rules a clearing – a light permitting opening

(*Lichtung*) as which the happening that is intrinsically self-closing brings itself to pass unconcealingly. This self-opening permits the Two-fold unitary happening as which Being and what-is come reciprocally to pass as one. Via it, pure self-closing Happening brings into play its own self-differentiating self-relating.

At the same time, that happening as Difference likewise permits pure happening to manifest and maintain itself in happening as the manifold which the Twofold of Being and what-is brings itself to light; for the differentiating thus brought into play ever ramifies throughout the happening forth of the Two-fold.

Disclosure of what-is is the disclosure of what-is in its particularity. Precisely there the differentiating that permits disclosure at all fulfils itself in the distinctiveness that we ever find to pertain to whatever is.

In *Identity and Difference*[25], Heidegger uses the word *anwähren* to describe the Happening in terms of the enduring quality of the Happening of Being. As this enduring, being, accomplishing pure Happening, comes initiatingly upon what-is, allowing the latter to present itself as unconcealed. This enduring is nothing other than pure Happening as the latter brings itself to bear as presencing (*Anwesen*). The being of what-is is the enduring - the constituting enduring - of what endures, an enduring that is inherently directed towards man. The word enduring suggests to us 'time' more than 'being', and thus Heidegger's thinking on Being immediately opens up his thinking on time, since for him, the two are intrinsically related.

For Heidegger, time is not a sequence of hours, days and years, but rather, genuine time is the opening clearing of self-concealing by way of which Being, happening as self-unconcealing, in accomplishing the uniting intrinsic to it as self-differentiating, brings itself to pass as the presencing of what presences. Heidegger tells us that: 'Being and time determine each other reciprocally, but in such a manner that neither can the former – Being – be addressed as something temporal nor can the latter – time – be addressed as a being.'[26] Heidegger calls time the first name of the truth of Being where truth, with a meaning drawn from the Greek *alētheia*, means unconcealment.[27] There is no simple identity between Being and Time in Heidegger's view, but time is Being seen as ongoingly opening itself that it may, as the Being of what-is, bring itself to pass as unconcealing.

As the title of the book suggests, the concept of time occupies an important place in *Being and Time*. As was previously mentioned, Heidegger's main task in *Being and Time* is to work out the question concerning the meaning of Being. It is from this perspective that time becomes a central theme in *Being and Time*. Already in the preface, Heidegger indicates how Being and time are related:

> ...We must show, on the basis of the question of the meaning of being which shall have been worked out, *that - and in what way - the central range of problems of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time correctly viewed and correctly explained.*[28]

According to Heidegger, the horizon against which Being is disclosed is temporality. Temporality should be seen as transcendental time/movement - transcendental in that it is not the movement of any particular thing. Transcendental time establishes the condition for any particular thing to move within time. Temporality is the background against which Being can appear and be apprehended. Time is thus intrinsic to Being and to everything appearing within the world.

The world is a complex of involvements. Worlds are historical for Heidegger, in the sense of having actual pasts and real futures that delimit and define the world as an existential matrix of possible things and activities. World is the place where all things are shaped[29].

Being is intimately connected with time in that each world has its own peculiar temporalisation of things. This is the way that historical worlds differ profoundly from one another. The way things come to presence vis-à-vis time defines a given historical world and holds its projects together in a distinctive whole.

World in the existential sense, then, admits of a plurality of ways in which transcendental time can be contracted into a determinate presencing of beings. We therefore speak of time as seen with respect to Being in its happening as an initiatory providing that, as a surmounting of evasive self-withdrawing, governs inclusively throughout vast ranges of the manifold of what-is, by way of extensive openings-up of time. This means that we speak of time as the milieu of the historical.

For Heidegger, history (*Geschichte*) is not a mere succession of events understood in a causal fashion. Reality as history is far more complex than this. It is that transpiring

complex as humanly lived out and understood always according to some identifying mode of happening that renders it meaningful to those who take their way via its course[30]. History is a transpiring of happening that is accomplished through a human questioning into reality and through a resolute confronting of the latter that brings it to light. '…It is only because Dasein's existence is historical that it can engage in historical questioning.'[31]

It is this portrayal of being as the being of what-is, i.e. as a self-differentiating, single happening that, in its maintaining of itself as itself, through happening as time, opens itself disclosively and unfolds itself via ever-changeful self-particularisation, which stands central to Heidegger's thinking. The Being of what-is, happening by way of time as a self-concealing self-unconcealing, meets human being as the presencing of what presences. Human being belongs to the great manifold of what-is, and 'is' among the entities as which the twofold unfolds by way of time. In fact, Heidegger announces that 'The meaning of the being of that being we call Da-sein proves to be temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*].'[32] How does Heidegger view human being in this sense?

2.5 Human being as Dasein

Heidegger tells us that 'Truth happens by the simple fact that Dasein exists, i.e., is there at all.'[33] In this sense, truth is a presupposition that has already been made for us, by the very being which we ourselves are. Before we can investigate truth, then, we need to investigate what Heidegger means by Dasein. What does Heidegger tell us about this being which we are?

Human being, Heidegger maintains, is a Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*)[34]. On hearing the phrase 'being-in', we immediately think of a spatially-containing relationship, like 'The water is in the glass'. This notion of 'in' refers to things related by juxtaposition. This, however, is not what Heidegger means when he speaks of the relation Dasein has to the world.

> …Being-in designates a constitution of being of Dasein, and is an *existential*. But we cannot understand by this the objective presence of a material thing (the human body) 'in' a being objectively present. Nor does the term being-in designate a spatial 'in one another' of two things objectively present, any more than the word 'in' primordially means a spatial relation of this kind.[35]

As I have mentioned, the first division of *Being and Time* is a preparatory fundamental analysis of Dasein. Heidegger does not aim to list all of Dasein's existentiell modes, or to analyse each one of them, or to rely on assumptions about human nature that have hitherto guided anthropologists, psychologists or philosophers[36]. Instead, he offers a critical evaluation of those assumptions by developing an existential analytic of Dasein that allows Dasein's being to show itself in itself and for itself. The analytic is preparatory in that its conclusions provide a starting point from which the analysis can be deepened, revealing the fundamental relationship between the Being of Dasein and temporality. In this way, the first division prepares the way for the second. The analytic of Dasein in the first division is thus preliminary and is intended as an elaboration of the question of Being. In the second division, Heidegger repeats the analytic of Dasein, by grasping the existentialia (the basic structures of the mode of being of the enquirer) afresh in the context of temporality. This is because as was previously mentioned, Heidegger sees temporality as the horizon for understanding the being of Dasein.

Heidegger begins with the fact that the essence of man consists in his ek-sistence; that toward which man stands out is the world[37]; thus, one can say that the essence of man is being-in-the-world. The main task of the first division, then, is to reveal the precise meaning of this compound expression. The hyphenated form of this phrase is intentional, since it is meant to be indicative of the 'primordial unity of the terms'.[38] This is in preparation for an answer to the question concerning the meaning of Being. Heidegger justifies this approach to the question of Being by pointing out that human being taken as being-in-the-world is the only being who can make himself understandable in his own mode of being[39].

Being is an unconcealedness or disclosiveness for Heidegger. Human being, or Dasein (being there) is the place of Being's disclosure. Human being is the worldly opening (*Offene*) in which Being's truth is revealed. In the words of Bernard Dauenhauer, man is essentially the 'musician of Being'.[40]

Heidegger is not suggesting that human beings must exist for there to be a universe of extant things, but human being is the only place where the Beingness of beings comes to presence, revealing a contextual world of meaning. Only through human being does Being come to presence. Heidegger is not saying that human being is itself necessary, that human being always already was, or is destined to forever

persist. Indeed, to be human means to live with expectation of death[41]. However, if and whenever human being exists, it does so embedded in and revealing of a world. Human being does not exist in any 'neutral' sense apart from its concrete, embedded reality. Dasein is not a substance, but a relation, a disclosive weddedness to the world. In this way, Heidegger's Dasein introduces the beginnings of a decentering of human being's position – Heidegger's point was to avoid retaining the idea of human being as the subject of modern metaphysics. Heidegger's phenomenology developed as a reaction against the Cartesian conception of the subject as essentially a worldless *res cogitans*. He does not, however, see human being simply as an object in a mechanistic universe. According to Overenget,

> '...Heidegger rejects the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy in both its subjective and objective garb. He does not see the modern shift in emphasis away from *res cogitans* to *res extensa* as any more tenable, or less Cartesian, for that matter, than the traditional emphasis on a mental reality. Thus, Heidegger seeks to get beyond the entire dichotomy, and aims at rehabilitating the subjective perspective without resorting to the *res cogitans*'.[42]

Just as Heidegger insists that we do not have bodies, rather we are 'bodily', he insists that we do not *have* a world, we are 'worldly'. He realised that it was a mistake to epistemologically separate the perceiving and knowing subject from its concrete worldliness. Our concrete, spatial existence is not separate from our perceiving, mental existence. A structural unity exists. Knowledge, therefore, is not something gleaned by a mind from a separate, external reality, but something absorbed in the midst of worldly existence. Heidegger's understanding of being-in-the-world thus allows him to avoid both radical individualism and Cartesian dualism.

A way to understand the unified structure of Being-in-the-world is to visualise human being as a diffused radius of disclosure[43]. The world of beings is disclosed as it comes to presence in the diffusely illuminated 'there' of human being. What comes to presence always stands within this populated clearing (*Lichtung*) – the clearing opened up by Dasein[44]. There are horizons to an individual's world and so not everything will be revealed at once. Certain features within the lighted area will be obscured by shadows. The clearing symbolises not simply the visual perceptions of human being, nor even simply its complete sensory field, but importantly, also its comportment, demeanour and mood.

Before anything can be discovered as an entity in itself, unrelated to and apart from its surroundings, it must already be given as related to Dasein. In such a state, an entity is ready to hand. Things ready-to-hand can be encountered only as 'un-ready-to-hand'. This consists in a disruption of the referentiation between an entity that is ready-to-hand and Dasein. Such a disruption can come about in three ways: the entity that should be ready-to-hand is unready-to-hand because the entity is damaged, or the entity is missing, or another presence or absence disrupts the relation between the entity and Dasein[45].

When an entity that is ready-to-hand is unusable, it becomes conspicuous. Dasein is disrupted from the activity with which it was concerned and its attention is drawn to the item of equipment as something there, something apart from all else. When an item of equipment that is ready to hand is missing, it too becomes obtrusive. Its absence created a 'hole' in the matrix of relationships directed towards Dasein. When an entity blocks an item of equipment from Dasein's view, it becomes obstinate. This blocking entity confronts Dasein as the unusable and as such becomes unrelatable to Dasein. These three deficient modes of Being - obtrusiveness, conspicuousness and obstinacy are the three ways in which an entity ready-to-hand manifests itself to Dasein[46].

Human being illuminates its world in various ways. Dasein may reveal things as part of an instrumental assemblage or system, as things *ready-to-hand (zuhanden)*. Much of what we encounter in our daily lives constitutes such equipment. Being ready-to-hand means being part of a network of things that relate to each other with functional interdependence. The ready-to-hand is thus less a what (object) than a how (form of coming to presence). The ready-to-hand is revealed as an integrated, functional part of a navigated world[47].

Things can also be revealed not as parts of a functional whole made ready for use, but also as isolated objects that permit focused observation or contemplation. Heidegger calls this the 'present-at-hand' (*Vorhanden*). The present-at-hand comes into focus for abstract consideration only with its context already established and usually taken for granted. The narrower, concentrated light illuminating the present-at-hand causes the surroundings to be temporarily obscured. The obscurity of the surroundings serves to define the object of attention.

We call the act of focusing attention and giving meaning to particular objects interpretation. Heidegger insists that interpretation is not a matter of imposing meaning on a passive world lying before us. Rather, the things that we interpret already have an involvement, which is disclosed in our understanding of the world, and the involvement is one that gets laid out by the interpretation. A hammer, for example, is revealed as ready-to-hand when used for hammering nails. It may also, for example, be revealed as present-at-hand if it is scientifically investigated as to its weight or durability. In each case, the question is less what the thing is than how it comes to be revealed[48].

Human beings always already exist in a ready-to-hand world[49]. Only then do they engage in interpretations that carry them beyond their preontological understandings. Thus, formal interpretation, whether scientific or philosophical, arises from the foundation of primordial interpretative activity.

Apart from the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand, there is another way that things are in the world. Human being may reveal itself or another human being as Dasein (literally, being-there), as a self-interpreting being. To reveal a human being as Dasein is to reveal a being sharing one's world in a self-interpreting manner. To understand Dasein as self-interpreting does not mean that human being is defined by a solely inward-looking comportment. Self-interpretation is as much a reaching outward as a turning inward.

> The world of Da-sein is a *with-world*. Being-in is *being-with* others. The innerworldly being-in-itself of others is *Mitda-sein*. The others are not encountered by grasping and previously discriminating one's own subject, initially objectively present, from other subjects also present. They are not encountered by first looking at oneself and then ascertaining the opposite pole of a distinction. They are encountered from a *world* in which Da-sein, heedful and circumspect, essentially dwells. [50]

The horizon of the individual Dasein is always in fusion with the horizons of others[51]. Thus, communication among self-interpreting beings is not the mere transference of information or knowledge from one formerly isolated subject to another. Rather, it is the co-discovery of meaning. Meaning is always discovered in the context of a world - it is the bringing to light of a worldly context. Communication, interpretation and the

discovery of meaning originate from and continually evidence the embeddedness of human being in a shared world[52].

To discover meaning is to uncover an aspect of one's Being-in-the-world, and to communicate this to others. As an interpretative being, human being is always involved with language and communication, and so is inherently a social being. Heidegger says: 'The world of Dasein is a *with-world (Mitwelt)*. Being-in is a *Being-with* others.'[53] Human being exists structurally as a Being-with-others, even in the midst of physical solitude. Physical, emotional, moral or cognitive solitude always takes place in the context of an original and continuing relation to the with-world. In fact, solitude sharpens our sense of the with-world, so that we may better distance ourselves from its effects. According to Heidegger: 'Being-with existentially determines Da-sein even when an other is not factically present and perceived. The being-alone of Da-sein too, is being-with in the world'[54].

Therefore, Heidegger responds to the metaphysical quandary of the isolated subject seeking communicative and moral access to other human beings in the same way that he responds to the metaphysical quandary of the isolated subject seeking epistemological access to the external world: he simply denies the atomistic presuppositions. Philosophers like Husserl and Sartre begin with *my* world and then try to account for how an isolated subject can give meaning to other minds and to the shared intersubjective world. On the contrary, Heidegger thinks that the very idea of a world indicates that it can be shared, and so *the* world is always prior to *my* world. The decentering of the subject, which Heidegger accomplishes by asserting that Dasein is being-in-the-world, receives further impetus from his insistence that being-in-the-world is always a being-with-others[55].

For Heidegger, human being's essence lies in his existence[56]. From a phenomenological point of view, there is no essential self before there are intentional acts. Only human being can ask the question of Being because we are the only beings who can stand back from the objective condition of things and put ourselves into question. Only human being can ex-sist in this reflective manner. Human being is the only being whose existence is an issue for him[57]. He is a being who is perpetually reaching beyond himself towards the world, towards horizons of meaning beyond his present condition. Human existence is an activity of endless transcendence.

The essence of human being is temporality[58], for we can only understand ourselves in the present by referring to the temporal horizons of our existence, that is, by recollecting our past and projecting our future. Man is temporality, because what he is always presupposes what he has been and what he will be. Thus, Heidegger describes Dasein as a mode of being which is always projecting itself beyond its possibilities. Human existence cannot be seen as a determined fact - it must be seen as a project of possibility.

Human being is defined by its 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*) or 'facticity' (*Faktizität*)[59]. Being-in-the-world means being always already situated. Human being is a being that exists as part of the world, and most importantly, by way of its worldliness.

Dasein always finds himself in a given situation. Thus, our self-understanding is always limited by certain environmental, cultural, social, psychological and economic conditions - our facticity. Our existence is always conditioned by a certain state of mind, which is governed by actual historical circumstances. This historical situatedness never predetermines Dasein to be this or that particular thing, however. Dasein understands his own facticity in terms of possibility, because he reinterprets his given circumstances in terms of the open horizon of his future[60].

Traditional Western thinking conceives freedom as the autonomous subject's most valued asset, as its capacity to comprehend and control what it confronts. Heidegger understands freedom as that which exposes human being to the incomprehensible and intractable: to Being[61]. Heidegger realises that once freedom becomes a value, it ceases to identify that which enables us to partake of the mystery of Being. Freedom is the 'gift'[62] that allows human being to glance beyond himself, beyond beings, and beyond his possession and mastery in thought, word, or deed.

Dasein is freedom to the extent that his existence as temporal transcendence towards the possible is irreducible to the sum of his conditioning circumstances in the present[63]. Human being is a being-in-the-world-alongside-entities, not some intangible 'cogito'. Human being finds himself thrown into a world which is not his own, and yet, while he is bound by this finite condition of thrownness, he is still free to choose how he will reappropriate the meanings of this world for himself in order to project them into the open horizon of future possibilities. Thus, Dasein is free to re-determine the pre-determined.

Human being finds his freedom in care taking, as a shepherd of Being, in concernfully letting the Being of beings be. Freedom is not so much a property of human being's will as it is a reflection of his worldliness[64]. In stark contrast with the Western metaphysical tradition, freedom is not a value for Heidegger, but beyond valuation; it is not evidenced in willfullness, but in a waitfulness; it is not an unbounded power of choice, but a discovery and acknowledgement of one's place within bounds; it is not an obtaining and controlling, but a letting-be.

Resoluteness means 'unclosedness', and so is an opening of the self to the questioning, not the controlling, of Being[65]. Resolute openness manifests human freedom: to be resolutely occupied with the question of one's own being is to understand one's own freedom. In making his own being an issue, human being opens himself to the question of beings as a whole. Only in the midst of and as a concern for this world is freedom found.

Dasein is free according to the resoluteness of his decisions. His past acts can be reinterpreted in different possible ways in the light of his future projects. His understanding of himself in terms of the future does not have to be the same as his understanding of himself in terms of the past. He may be born into a certain family, religion, nationality, language, political system and so on, but nothing prevents him from deciding to respond to these conditioning circumstances in a new way. Human being's understanding of the world always involves a decision of self-understanding.

For Heidegger, understanding refers primarily to those 'pre-reflective' moods of our lived experience[66], for example, anguish, guilt and fear. Heidegger identifies these not simply as psychological emotions, but as ontological acts of pre-understanding. He argues, for example, that our common experience of anguish, which we call depression, is irreducible to the sum of its ostensible causes. We are not simply depressed because of an event in our lives. These events are no more than occasions, which disrupt our normal patterns of behaviour. At its deepest level, according to Heidegger, anguish is an ontological 'mood', which expresses being-in-the-world as an experience of non-being. Unlike fear, anguish lacks any identifiable object - it occurs precisely when nothing is the matter[67].

Dasein's understanding is existential before it is philosophical, it is lived before it is conceptualised. Human existence constitutes what Heidegger calls a 'hermeneutic circle', to the extent that it implicitly interprets Being in terms of its everyday moods

and projects, before it raises this interpretation to the level of explicit philosophical questioning[68]. We already know, however vaguely, what we are looking for when we ask the question of Being[69].

Heidegger highlights the fact that human being is a being-towards-death in that his/her existence ultimately culminates in death[70]. Death represents the end[71] - in the sense of conclusion and goal - of all our possibilities. Death is the final and sovereign possibility, the impossibility of any further possibilities. Our experience of Being is thus radically finite. All human being's existence is preoccupied by an awareness of his/her own ultimate nothingness – his/her being-towards-death. This awareness is experienced as anguish, which, for Heidegger, is the most fundamental of all human being's existential moods[72].

Death is experienced as anguish (*Angst*) to the extent that it reveals itself as a nothingness within human being. This experience makes human being realise that nothingness lies concealed as the groundless ground of his/her being-in-the-world. This realisation does not involve an objective observation of death – 'Death is the *ownmost* possibility of Da-sein'[73]. Human being cannot have a detached representation of nothingness, for it is the realisation of the self itself and of all objective entities as ultimately groundless. The self discovers that it is nothingness[74]. It breaks through the field of normal consciousness, which separates existence into purely subjective thought and purely objective beings. In anguish, the being of the self and all other things is nullified and becomes a question mark. Human being reaches down into an ontological mode of existence that goes deeper than mere psychology[75].

Anguish is not an end in itself, but rather serves as an openness to Being. The anguish of Dasein can become a clearing for a more fundamental manifestation of *Sein* itself. Anguish dispossesses human being of the illusion of being a timeless self-contained entity and prepares him for the question of Being - 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' This question expresses itself ultimately in an existential attitude of care[76]. Anguish is the call of conscience that reminds human being that the meaning of the world is not simply invented out of private subjectivity, but is given to it by Being itself. Human being no longer takes its being-in-the-world for granted, but questions its ultimate meaning[77]. As the word 'call' suggests, Heidegger sees the voice of conscience as a mode of discourse that attempts to disrupt the idle talk of the they to which Dasein is ordinarily attuned[78].

Heidegger defines human being's shared Being-in-the-world as *care (Sorge)*[79]. Human being cares to the extent that it concerns itself with its worldly nature. This involves a concern for its Being-with-other, as well as a concern for the meaning of this ontological structure. For Heidegger, care is the always-already-interpretative comportment of human being. Human beings care because they are involved with the world and its meanings. To care is to be concerned with the meaning of oneself *in* the world, and so is not the same as being self-absorbed.

Care is the 'primary totality of the constitution of Dasein, which as this totality always adopts this or that particular way of its can-be.'[80] The particular 'can-be' of a Dasein refers to its ontic possibilities, which, though always founded on the ontological structure of care, remain distinct from it. Ontic means that which does not directly address the ontological fundamentals of human being, but rather pertains to concrete possibilities[81].

In using this distinction, Heidegger attempts to distinguish between ontological descriptions and ethical dictates. Human being always already exists as an embodied, social, worldly relation, and this ontological description is neither more nor less valid, simply because certain human beings deny or obscure their social or worldly nature, or repudiate its practical extension to an explicitly moral realm. To be altruistic is to choose to channel one's thought, feeling and actions into one's capacities for empathy. Empathy is an emotional and ethical disposition. To be empathetic is to extend a self *already embedded* in a social world in a way such that emotional and ethical connections come to the fore[82]. To be egoistic means to route this energy elsewhere. Neither activity changes the fundamental structure of human being as care, a Being-in-the-world-with-others, fundamentally concerned with the meaning of its being.

Heidegger is not suggesting that we discard our moral predispositions in order to engage in ontological questioning. But neither should we attempt to escape ontological investigation behind the alleged security of ethical concepts and formulae. We should not abandon morality, but neither should we subordinate ontology to it. Before we determine the principles and rules by which we ought to live with others, we need to understand who we are, and what our Being-in-the world-with-others means.

One of the most well known distinctions made by Heidegger with regards to Dasein is that between authentic and inauthentic Dasein. Dasein is authentic when he ceases to take the world for granted as some objective entity 'present-at-hand', recognising it as an open horizon of possibilities 'ready-to-hand'. Being is revealed authentically through the temporal horizon of Dasein as it is lived towards its final possibility of death and so remains open to the otherness of Being. Dasein can only accede to an authentic awareness of Being as other by first acknowledging its own existence as its own. To open himself to Being, Dasein must first assume responsibility for his being-towards-death as his own-most possibility. To choose resolutely to live towards his death and appropriating the experience of his ultimate nothingness is to live his freedom authentically[83]. In other words, the fundamental possibilities of Dasein (authenticity and inauthenticity) show themselves in *Angst* [84].

Inauthenticity is a refusal of Dasein's being-towards-death. It is also a refusal of the revelation of Being. Human being exists inauthentically to the extent that he flees from his awareness of freedom, responsibility and death, seeking refuge in the security of the anonymous 'They', who make sure of a constant tranquillization about death[85]. The 'They' define human being as a fixed actuality, rather than a free possibility. They ward off anguish by concealing the experience of death and lulling human being into a passive conformity. To experience anguish is to return to the authentic awareness that he is a displaced person, out of joint with the 'They' and with himself. It is to recognise that nobody can die for him. Death can never be made into an 'object' external to him. He experiences death in his deepest interiority, as the very texture of his existence. In other word, his being-towards-death is inalienably his own. By retrieving the authentic self from the inauthentic crowd, Dasein confronts his own ontological condition of homelessness. He begins to care for Being. The authentic attitude leads naturally to reflection, recalling that our existence is an issue for us and so doing breathes life into the forgotten question of Being.

To be authentic is to resist the perspective of the 'they' (*das Man*), which is the predominant mode of human being in its 'everydayness' (*Alltäglichkeit*). The everyday refers to the customary mode of human being. It is the realm of coping with everyday existence, its banalities, perversions, its necessities and its passions. For Heidegger, inauthenticity is characterised as a 'falling' (*Verfallen*), a way of routinely 'Being-alongside' entities without bringing their or one's own being into question. Inauthenticity is a losing of the self into a way of being that is primarily 'social'. It is a regression into the habits and conformities of routine social existence. On the other

hand, authenticity is a resolute maintenance of the self out of this stream of unselfconscious habituation that brings about ontological questioning.

Heidegger's notion of authenticity in no way signals a retreat from his fundamental understanding of human being as a being-with-others. Social life is indeed rooted in convention, and Heidegger readily acknowledges its ever-presentness and indispensable utility. But, social convention is simply an unavoidable game soliciting participation, not an unremitting master demanding thoughtless fidelity. To be authentic is neither to deprecate nor to escape social life, but simply to experience it in a particular manner. The authentic individual is characterised by this recognition and acceptance of his inevitable thrownness in the with-world. Authenticity solicits one to inhabit this world self-consciously, to acknowledge the social constitution of human being, while at the same time refusing to become lost in the customary modes of coping that inhibit his ontological reflection. Only through being-with-others do we come to know ourselves as individuals.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have attempted to give as thorough as possible an account of Heidegger's conception of human being as Dasein, as well as of his revival of the question of Being in a manner completely different from that of traditional ontology by looking at selected sections of *Being and Time*. I have discussed Heidegger's decentering of the subject by means of his vision of Dasein as being-in-the-world and being-with-others. In this context I have briefly discussed his view of freedom, as well as his ideas on authentic and inauthentic existence. Although I have not dealt with criticisms of this vision of human being as the being whose being is an issue for it, I will explore this in the final chapter.

As was asserted in my first chapter, I believe it is essential to review Heidegger's work as a whole in order to understand the essential linkages between the so-called 'earlier' and 'later' Heideggers. This discussion of *Being and Time* and some of its central themes is therefore meant as an introduction to the central concepts in Heidegger's philosophy, in order to prepare for the forthcoming discussion on truth. In the discussion of his ideas on truth, I trace the development of the concept from the earlier works, through to the later expositions.

[1] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 1.

[2] The translation I will use throughout is *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996). I do alter the quotations by using the capitalised 'Being' when Heidegger refers to the German *Sein*, and the uncapitalised 'beings' when he speaks of *Seiendes*, to avoid confusion.

[3] See O. Pöggeler, Metaphysics and Topology of Being in Heidegger in J.J. Kockelmans (ed.) *A Companion to Martin Heidegger's "Being and Time"* (Lanham, University Press of America, 1986), p. 231.

[4] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 6.

[5] *Ibid.*,p. 41.

[6] *Ibid.*,p. 83.

[7] *Ibid.*,p. 6.

[8] At the very end of his introduction to *Being and Time* (p. 34), Heidegger takes the word 'phenomenology' to describe his work, and acknowledges Husserl's influence. Yet, he fails to provide any detailed analysis of the Husserlian project. Instead, he offers an etymological analysis of the term, and then proceeds to derive his own project from this analysis.

[9] J-L Marion. *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger and Phenomenology.* T.A. Carlson (Trans.) (Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1998), p. 48.

[10] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 30.

[11] See J-L Marion. *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger and Phenomenology.* T.A. Carlson (Trans.) (Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1998), p. 40.

[12] For a discussion on the difference in approaches used by Heidegger and Husserl, see J-L Marion. *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger and Phenomenology.* T.A. Carlson (Trans.) (Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1998), p. 84

[13] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 2.

[14] O. Pöggeler, Metaphysics and Topology of Being in Heidegger in J.J. Kockelmans (ed.), *A Companion to Martin Heidegger's 'Being and Time'* (U.S.A., University Press of America, 1986). p. 236.

[15] M. Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen, Neske 1957, 1986), p. 49. *'So wird das Sein des Seienden als der gründende Grund vorausgedacht'.*

[16] See R. Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 98.

[17] M. Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen, Neske 1957, 1986), p. 58.

[18] M. Heidegger, *Postscript to 'What is Metaphysics?'* in *Pathmarks* W. McNeill (ed.), (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 233.

[19] M. Heidegger, Letter on Humanism in *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger* D.F. Krell (trans.) (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 234.

[20] M. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (U.S.A., Yale University Press, 1964), p. 101.

[21] M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being* (New York, Harper and Row, 1972), p. 2.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[23] M. Heidegger, On the Essence of Ground in *Pathmarks* W. McNeill (ed.)(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 97.

[24] M. Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Gunther Neske, Pfullingen, 1986), p. 57; 'Die Differenz van Sein und Seiendem ist als der Unter-Schied von Überkommnis und Ankunft der *entbergend-bergende Austrag* beider.'

[25] M. Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Gunther Neske, Pfullingen, 1986).

[26] M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being* (New York, Harper and Row, 1972), p. 3.

[27] Like time, Being's happening as unconcealment, i.e. as truth, is identified with the clearing (Lichtung) that preservingly opens Being's happening as self-concealing. See M. Heidegger, On the Essence of Truth in *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger Revised and Expanded Edition* D.F. Krell (trans.) (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 127.

[28] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 16.

[29] See R. Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.46, 47.

[30] See *ibid.*, p. 168.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

[32] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 15.

[33] J.D. Caputo, On Being Inside/Outside Truth in J.L. Marsh, J.D. Caputo and M. Westphal (eds), *Modernity and its Discontents* (New York, Fordham University Press, 1992), p. 46.

[34] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 49.

[35] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 50, 51.

[36] See *ibid.*, p. 42-46.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[38] G.F. Sefler, *Language and the World: A Methodological Synthesis within the writings of Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J., Humanities Press, 1974), p. 30.

[39] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 67.

[40] B.P. Dauenhauer, An Approach to Heidegger's Way of Philosophizing, *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 1971, p. 272.

[41] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 216.

[42] E. Overenget. Heidegger and Arendt: Against the Imperialism of Privacy, *Philosophy Today*, 1995, p. 432.

[43] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 125.

[44] E. Overenget. Heidegger and Arendt: Against the Imperialism of Privacy, *Philosophy Today*, 1995, p. 439

[45] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 69.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[48] Heidegger's famous hammer example deals with objects revealed as ready-to-hand rather than present-to-hand. See M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 64, 65.

[49] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 77.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[51] This concept of understanding as a fusion of horizons is adopted and developed by Gadamer. See H-G. Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Translated end edited by David E. Linge. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. xi-xxxiii.

[52] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 111. See also Mulhall, R. *Heidegger and Being and Time* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 171.

[53] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 112.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

[55] D.R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The fate of the Political.* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 213.

[56] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 39

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 213.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 350, 351.

[61] J.J. Kockelmans, Being-true as the basic determination of Being. In J.J. Kockelmans (ed.), *A Companion to Martin Heidegger's 'Being and Time'* (U.S.A., University Press of America, 1986), p. 149, 150.

62 W.J. Richardson. Heidegger and the Quest of Freedom in Kockelmans, J.J. (ed.), *A Companion to Martin Heidegger's 'Being and Time'* (U.S.A., University Press of America, 1986). p. 178.

63 R. Kearney. *Modern Movements in European Philosophy*. (Wolfeboro: Manchester University Press, 1987) p. 33.

64 D.R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political*. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 120.

65 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 275.

66 *Ibid*., p. 134.

67 *Ibid*., p. 174.

68 *Ibid*., p. 143.

69 *Ibid*., p. 6.

70 *Ibid*., p. 232.

71 *Ibid*., p. 227, 228.

72 *Ibid*., p. 232.

73 *Ibid*., p. 243.

74 *Ibid*., p. 245.

75 *Ibid*., p. 222.

76 *Ibid*., p. 256.

77 *Ibid*., p. 283.

78 R. Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 125.

79 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 322.

80 M. Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 306.

81 R. Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 58.

82 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 117, 118.

83 W.J. Richardson. Heidegger and the Quest of Freedom in Kockelmans, J.J. (ed.), *A Companion to Martin Heidegger's 'Being and Time'* (U.S.A., University Press of America, 1986), p. 170.

84 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 178.

85 *Ibid*., p. 235.